



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

May 31, 2013

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: Parties Interested in the Proposed Bald Hill Farms Acquisition under the 2010 Willamette Wildlife Habitat Agreement

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to provide a portion of the purchase cost of the 483-acre Bald Hill Farm property located west of the City of Corvallis in Benton County, Oregon. Greenbelt Land Trust will purchase the property with funding from BPA, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, US Fish and Wildlife Service through its Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Recovery Land Acquisition Grant Program, a generous donation by the landowner, and funds raised from members of the community. This letter is being sent to inform nearby residents and other parties of this proposed land purchase, outline our process, and describe where to find further information.

Conserving this property will provide long-lasting fish and wildlife habitat benefits by adding to a growing network of conservation lands in the Willamette Valley by linking Bald Hill Farm to the adjacent Bald Hill Natural Area and two nearby protected natural areas (Fitton Green Natural Area and Lupine Meadows Natural Area). After Greenbelt Land Trust has acquired the property they will grant a conservation easement to BPA to ensure that the habitat values on the property are always protected. The conservation easement will remain in place even if the ownership changes.

Funding this land purchase partially fulfills commitments made by BPA for mitigation of transmission projects, and commitments made in the 2010 "Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wildlife Habitat Protection and Enhancement between the State of Oregon and the Bonneville Power Administration", part of ongoing efforts to mitigate for the impacts to fish and wildlife from the construction and operation of federal flood control and hydroelectric facilities in the Willamette River Basin.

This land purchase will also meet the requirements of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) August 18, 2009 *BPA Pole Replacement Biological Opinion* for the Santiam Toledo/Albany-Burnt Woods rebuild project's effects upon Fender's blue butterfly and Kincaid's lupine. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) is currently being prepared between BPA and USFWS that documents the land transaction and continuing management of a portion of the property for the two species.

The 483-acre Bald Hill Farm is a key landscape described in Benton County's Habitat Conservation Plan for Prairie Species and currently contains three federally listed plant species (Kincaid's lupine, *Lupinus sulphureus* ssp. *Kincaidii*; Willamette daisy, *Erigeron decumbens* var. *decumbens*; and Nelson's checkermallow, *Sidalcea nelsoniana*). The property is comprised of native Willamette Valley upland and wetland prairie, oak savanna, oak woodland, and riparian forest and shrubland, including multi-species stands of mixed-age Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*) with large legacy trees more than 100 years old, and 70-80 year-old Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesi*) and grand fir (*Abies grandis*) trees. Riparian forest and shrubland habitats surround and buffer much of Mulkey Creek and unnamed tributaries to Newton Creek that flow through the property. Existing habitats support a diverse assemblage of native species, including, but not limited to, acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), Oregon vesper sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus affinis*), white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis aculeate*), western bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*). This acquisition will link and

aggregate several other properties with conservation easements creating protected habitat at a landscape scale. The combination of all these protected properties will create an upland, wet prairie, and mixed oak/conifer conservation zone of over 1400 acres. Implementing conservation and restoration activities on such a large scale allows for significant progress on Benton County's Habitat Conservation Plan, the Oregon Conservation Strategy, and the recovery measures described in the USFWS Recovery Plan for the three listed species.

Bald Hill Farm will provide important educational opportunities for linking environmental conservation and agriculture in the Willamette Valley. One of the primary goals for Bald Hill Farm is to demonstrate how multiple values, including education, ecological protection and restoration, recreation, and local food production, can be managed and integrated on one property. In addition to the exceptional conservation and educational benefits of Bald Hill Farm, the property has nearly 6 km of managed, publically accessible hiking trails that connect to a nearly 15 km trail network on Fitton Green and Bald Hill Natural Areas.

Enclosed you will find a map of the Bald Hill Farm property. BPA has prepared an environmental clearance memo and environmental checklist documenting that funding the purchase of this property is categorically excluded under the National Environmental Policy Act and that further environmental review of this funding action is therefore not required. This categorical exclusion was approved on May 16, 2013 and has been posted on BPA's website at:

http://www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/categoricalexclusions.aspx

The Greenbelt Land Trust in coordination with BPA, will develop a management plan for the property and will provide the public an opportunity to review and comment on the plan. BPA must review and approve the plan before it can be implemented. It is anticipated that the Greenbelt Land Trust will restore and enhance habitat on the property and provide long-term stewardship of the land according to the actions defined in the management plan. Prior to funding additional land management activities on the property BPA will conduct further environmental review.

If you have any questions regarding purchase of this conservation easement please feel free to contact Dorie Welch with BPA at (503) 230-5479 or dwwelch@bpa.gov. You can also call BPA's toll free number (800) 622-4519; be sure to reference the "Bald Hill Farm Conservation Easement" in your message.

Sincerely,

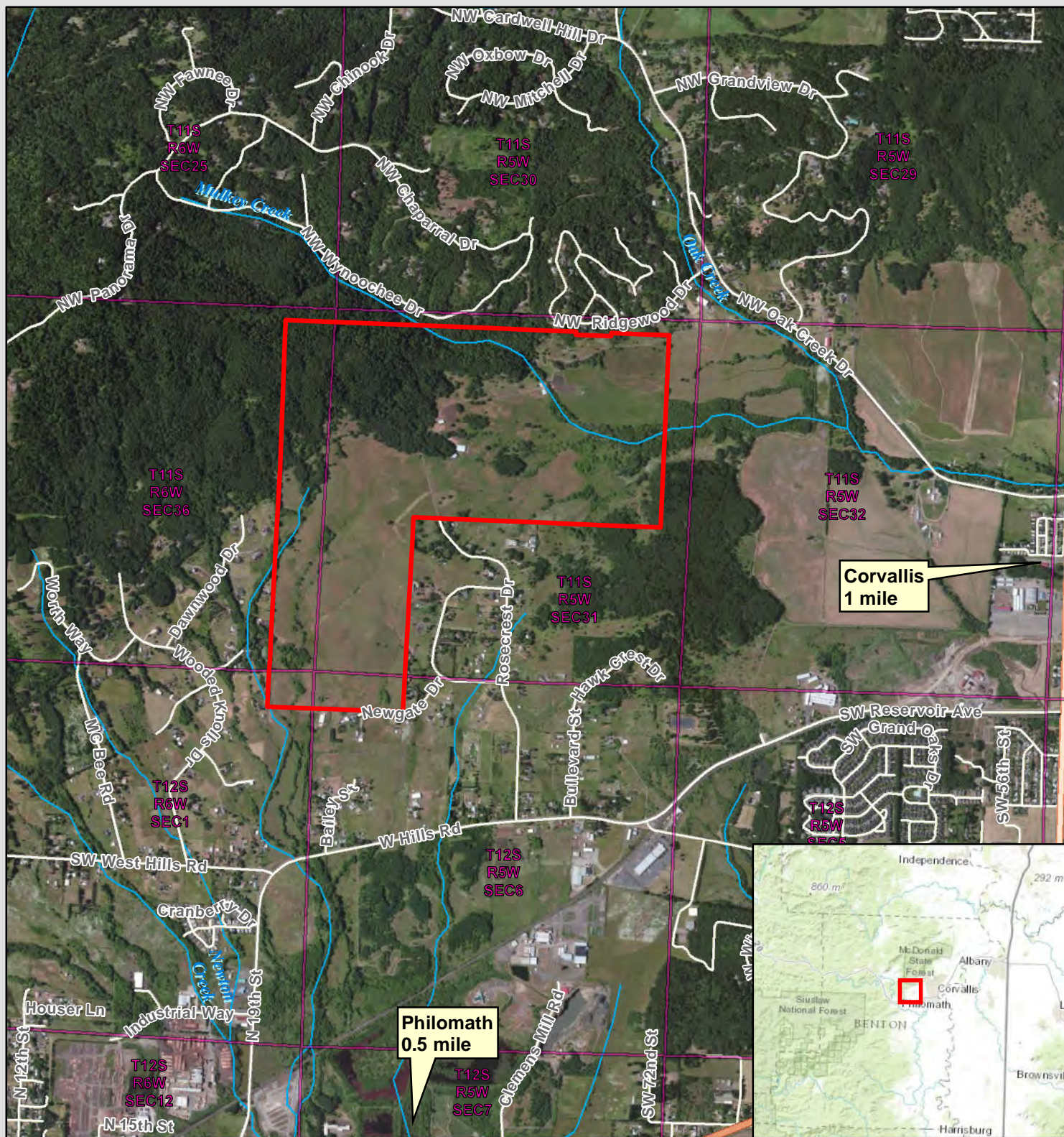
/s/ Israel Duran, May 31, 2013

Israel Duran

Environmental Protection Specialist – KEC-4

Enclosure:

Map



Bald Hill Property - Public Notification Map

Corvallis Quadrangle
Benton County, OR
(Approximately 483 Acres)

- Subject Property
- TRS Boundary

0 0.5 1 Mile

5/15/2013

